

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 02503 082251 Z

62

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12

RSR-01 /097 W

----- 008925

R 082216 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7396

INFO USCINCSO

GOV PANCANAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 2503

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, PN, PQ

SUBJ: CANAL TREATY: LOCAL SCENE SUMMARY

SUMMARY. AFTER GLEEFUL ORGY OF SELF- CONGRATULATIONS FOLLOWING UNSC MEETING IN MARCH PANAMANIAN APPEAR TO HAVE SETTLED INTO PERPLEXED AND REFLECTIVE MOOD. INITIAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF UN MEETING DEVELOPED NO CLEAR THEME FOR FUTURE USE AND SERIOUS TREATMENT OF ISSUE LARGELY PETERED OUT EVEN BEFORE GENERAL TORRIJOS SILENCED ANTI- IMPERIALIST HARANGUES BY GOVERNMENT MEDIA OUTLETS IN LATE APRIL. CANAL ISSUE NOW RECEIVING MODERATE HANDLING BY PRESS AND EVEN SOME IMPLIED CRITICISM OF GOVT' S POSITION IS GETTING THROUGH . END SUMMARY.

1. CHANGED MOOD IS ILLUSTRATED BY REACTION TO PRESIDENT' S FOREIGN POLICY REPORT TO CONGRESS. MAJOR COVERAGE WITHOUT EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS GIVEN BY INDEPENDENT DAILY LA ESTRELLA AND ITS ENGLISH LANGUAGE SISTER STAR & HERALD WHICH PLAYED AP STORIES QUOTING PRESIDENT NIXON THAT NOW IS TIME FOR NEW TREATY TO SATISFY PANAMANIAN ASPIRATIONS. GOVERNMENT' S EL PANAMA AMERICA RAN SIMILAR EFE STORY UNDER BANNER HEADLINE. OTHER GOVERNMENT LINKED NEWSPAPERS MATUTINO AND CRITICA RAN EFE MATERIAL WHICH EXCLUDED ANY REFERENCE TO CANAL, HEADLINING INSTEAD THAT PRESIDENT HAD CRITICIZED ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS. ON MAY 7 CRITICA RAN ONLY
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 02503 082251 Z

EDITORIAL COMMENT TO DATE WHICH DESCRIBED PRESIDENT' S POSITION AS " FLEXIBLE". THIS, ACCORDING TO CRITICA COULD CONTRIBUTE TO UNDERSTANDING ON CANAL ISSUE SINCE PANAMA' S ASPIRATIONS ARE NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH EFFICIENT CANAL OPERATIONS.

2. LOW- KEYED LOCAL ATMOSPHERE ALSO SET BY CURRENT DEBATE IN PAGES OF LA ESTRELLA BETWEEN JULIO YAU, ADVISOR TO FORIEGN OFFICE AND JULIO LINARES, REPRESENTATIVE OF TRADITIONAL LIBERAL OLIGARCHY AND INTERNATIONAL LAW SPECIALIST. IN MID- APRIL LA ESTRELLA PUBLISHED LINARES SPEECH BEFORE ROTARY CLUB AND SUBSEQUENT AFTER THOUGHTS.

LINARES CALLED FOR FIXING OF " PERMANENT" FOREIGN POLICY WHICH " ACCEPTED" AND " KNOWN" BY ALL PANAMANIAN. HE CHARGED THAT MAJOR DIFFICULTY IN PAST WAS TENDENCY FOR COUNTRY TO BLOW HOT AND COLD ON CANAL ISSUE. HE ALSO SPELLED OUT BROADLY STATED TREATY NEGOTIATING POSITION FREE OF ANTI- US JARGON, CALLING FOR EFFECTIVE SOVEREIGNTY THROUGHOUT NATIONAL TERRITORY AND EQUAL BENEFITS " FOR THE TWO COUNTRIES WHO MADE CANAL CONSTRUCTION POSSIBLE". YAU COUNTERED WITH ARTICLES CRITIZING LINARES' PRESENTATION FOR FAILURE TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION CLASS DIFFERENCES AMONG PANAMANIAN. ACCORDING TO YAU FOREIGN POLICY CANNOT BE PERMANENT BECAUSE IT MUST REFLECT INTERESTS OF DOMINANT CLASS. ONLY WITH PRESENT GOVT. ARE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND CAMPESINOS BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. (COMMENT: LINARES' LOFTY ARTICLES WITH THEIR IMPLIED CRITICISM MUST HAVE ANNOYED GOVT. GREATLY ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY ASSERTED THAT GOVT. DOES NOT HAVE MONOPOLY ON CANAL ISSUE.)

3. CRITICA COLUMNIST CAMILO O. PEREZ DID TWO PART COMMENT ON WASHINGTON STAR' S JERRY O' LEARY APRIL 26 ARTICLE. PEREZ, DILETTANTE LAWYER, ACTING LAW SCHOOL DEAN AND JOURNALIST, OFTEN HINTS AT CRITICISM OF GOVT. IN WILDY CONVOLUTED ESSAYS. HE DESCRIBED O' LEARY COLUMN AND ITS CONCLUSIONS THAT TREATY NEGOTIATIONS ARE STALLED DUE TO LACK OF PUBLIC PRESSURE IN EITHER COUNTRY AND THAT PANAMANIAN LEADERSHIP NEEDS CANAL ISSUE MORE THAN IT NEEDS NEW TREATY. HE ALSO NOTED USG POINT THAT IT DOES NOT KNOW WHO GOP NEGOTIATORS ARE. PEREZ SAID THAT IF AS O' LEARY SAYS PANAMA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR NEGOTIATIONS SLOWDOWN THE FOREIGN MINISTER SHOULD BE WARNED FOR HIS IRRESPONSIBILITY.

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5. COMMENT: THE PRESENT PERIOD OF CALM INTENDED PRESUMABLY
TO CREAT ATMOSPHERE FOR RETURN OF MORE NORMAL U. S.- PANAMANIAN

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GDS
Errors: n/a
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Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
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Review Comment: n/a
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Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
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Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <12 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
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30 JUN 2005

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Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 971223
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Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005